

CAMBRIDGE CENTRE *for*  
ANIMAL RIGHTS LAW

Helping to  
make **change**  
possible

Continuing the dialogue

Richard Martin's Act, 22 July 1822.  
2022 BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

The problem isn't with  
animal welfare laws...

The problem is  
that animals  
are property.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Animal welfare vs Animal rights.**

#### **Acknowledging there is a problem**

Cruelty to animals is seen as offensive, as morally unacceptable behaviour.

The first animal welfare laws go back some 200 years. They have achieved a great deal, in reducing suffering and improving quality of life.

But the problem hasn't gone away. The problem is that animals are property; ours to control, ours to slaughter.

My eggs come in a box  
that says they are

“happy”.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Animal welfare vs Animal rights.**

#### **Taking a step back towards objectivity**

Of course, most of us don't willingly or intentionally want animals to suffer. Quite the opposite, the love and affection we show towards our dogs and cats, the countless people who love and care for their animals. When we learn about cruel treatment we try and stop it, change laws, call for punishment for the wrongdoer.

So there isn't a problem, is there? Animals are doing fine. My eggs come in a box that says they are “happy”. My milk shows a cow in a green pasture. My beef is advertised in front of open meadows and mountains. My children read books about farm animals smiling over the wall next to the farmyard, being fed by the farmer or his children, chickens pecking in the grass for tasty food.

# ‘Welfare’

stops short of prohibiting  
the ultimate threat...

...the loss  
of life itself.

INTRODUCTION

**Animal welfare vs Animal rights.**

**Animal welfare has its limitations**

But there is a problem. Smiling pigs are only in children's books. Eggs from chickens that peck in fields are only a small proportion of the eggs we buy. The reality of life for farmed animals is mostly indoors with little or no access to fresh air, let alone fields. And slaughter is brutal.

Despite all of the achievements of animal welfare, there are two fundamental limitations. First, we have allowed words like "high welfare" to apply to industrial farming, even though any sensible meaning of the words would not cover most factory farming. Secondly, "welfare" stops short of prohibiting the ultimate threat to welfare: the loss of life itself.

**They are  
like us in  
many ways.**

INTRODUCTION

**Animal welfare vs Animal rights.**

**Changing the dialogue**

An alternative to animal welfare that overcomes these problems is animal rights, which are based on a different view of animals: that they are sentient, intelligent, creative, caring, affectionate, emotional—they are like us in many ways, and deserve to be treated in similar ways.

Animal rights would mean that animals are granted legal protections of their basic interests, such as their interest in being alive, in not being harmed, and in being free where possible.

**We recognise  
sentience as a  
basis for respect.**

INTRODUCTION

**Animal welfare vs Animal rights.**

**The impact of a different relationship**

A system of animal rights would change many of the basic attitudes towards animals we have held for thousands of years. It would mean that we recognise sentience as a basis for respect, and that we reject cruelty in any form. It might make us better people.

But for animal rights to get onto the statute book, we need to understand the legal issues: what rights mean, when they apply, how they fit with human rights, and whether animals are persons. In just the same way as we have had to understand the legal implications of environmental law, human rights law, or any other new legal field, so that when society is ready to introduce animal rights laws we know what they mean.

The work of the  
Centre is to explore  
what animal rights  
laws could look like.

### Our purpose

The Cambridge Centre for Animal Rights Law is not an advocacy group, but an educational organisation.

The work of the Centre is to explore what animal rights laws could look like, as well as presenting the merits and drawbacks of animal rights law.



# The groundwork will have been done.

## Our work

We are a UK-registered educational charity, and we work through research and by writing and by teaching—we hold conferences, we train law lecturers, we give talks to students and the general public.

And when governments decide to introduce animal rights laws, the groundwork will have been done.

Our mission

Helping to  
make **change**  
possible

**It really  
depends  
on your  
own view...**

OUR WORK

## **The importance of awareness and education**

### **Are we doing enough?**

It really depends on your own view. Are we getting things about right, in how we treat animals, or not?

If you think we are, then the changes can be evolutionary. We will need to regulate for specific issues as they arise. For example, better handling of animals to reduce the risk of spreading zoonotic diseases.

And we will need to regulate against problematic practices, like preventing laboratory testing on primates. Or the live export of cattle to countries with inhumane slaughtering practices. But evolutionary changes have always happened, and will continue. Reform in animal law has usually moved towards improved welfare.

But they likely won't. Welfare laws have reached something of a plateau. And while there are still opportunities for growth (strengthening enforcement of existing laws, improving labelling on meat products, having animal welfare laws in places that don't have them) the hotel idea will probably never happen.

And even then, there's still slaughter, which is always going to be noisy, scary, and violent.

We need to get people in universities and government and in civil society, to start to understand what can be envisaged.

OUR WORK

## The importance of awareness and education

### Can we go further?

If you think we need to do things very differently, then animal rights in some form are the best option. But in order for them to become law we need to understand what they mean: the different options for specific rights, how they will co-exist with human rights, and which animals will have what rights.

At the moment there is very little understanding of animal rights—we don't even have an agreed set of rights—and very few people are working on it.

The more that people start to think about it, the more that principles will be developed and refined and tested and refined again—until they get to a point where they become realistic and deliverable.

All the new fields of law we have now started as a few people with a few ideas—about protecting the oceans and the environment, about human rights, about same-sex marriage and the nature of the family.

And the even newer fields now—about ethical medical treatment, ownership of personal data, regulation of AI—are all being explored in universities and government and civil society. Universities and research centres are providing the solid, careful, considered, balanced research to allow these ideas to become law.

OUR WORK

**Our progress to date**

**Key achievements**

We were very fortunate to have early support from a US donor—the Brooks Institute for Animal Rights Law and Policy—that was willing to trust us to do what we said we would do, and gave us some money to get us started.

Neither the Director nor Executive Director took any remuneration from the Centre (and still don't), so we were able to offer everything we had planned:

**Course at Cambridge Law Faculty**

For the last three years we have been providing a course to Cambridge University students, 16 one-hour lectures in the Law Faculty, which attracted law students as well as vets and others.

**Annual Conference**

In 2019 we began our annual European Animal Rights Law Conference, with academics and practitioners from Europe and elsewhere for three days of presentations and discussion.

**Visitors Programme**

We have a Visitors Programme, inviting PhD students and post-docs from around the world to come to Cambridge for one term to conduct research on a topic of interest related to animal rights law.

**Research**

Members of our Centre have published cutting-edge research in leading specialist animal law and generalist law journals. Our research has explored themes such as the relationship between animal rights and human rights, dignity, landmark court rulings in animal rights law, and the rise of animal rights law as a scientific discipline. We have also edited special journal issues giving other scholars a forum for their research.

**We were able to offer  
everything we had planned.**

OUR WORK

# Our progress

## **Online teaching**

During the pandemic we took the Animal Rights Law course given in the Cambridge Law Faculty and adapted it for a wider online audience. This course maps the status quo of animal welfare law; explores the philosophy and jurisprudence of animal rights law, as well as connections with human rights and other social justice movements; and discusses legislation, treaties, and litigation efforts.

## **Law Lecturers' Workshop**

Starting in 2020, we have been holding an annual training programme for Law lecturers from all over Europe to give them the tools to teach an Animal Rights Law course at their home university. The aim of these workshops is to help establish Animal Rights Law as a firm part of Law students' curricula and to build networks for teachers and scholars in the field.

## **Talking Animals, Law & Philosophy talk series**

Since 2015, we have been inviting leading scholars and practitioners to come to Cambridge to present and discuss their work in a welcoming, engaging, and rigorous forum for debate and ideas called the Talking Animals, Law & Philosophy series. To date, we have hosted over 30 talks from international experts who have presented on a diverse range of topics, from "A Theory of Global Inter-Species Justice" to "Zoorisprudence: How Should the Law Treat Animals?".

OUR WORK

# Our progress

## **Online Workshops**

During the pandemic, we have organised a series of online workshops which have focused on specific topics and allowed researchers from a number of fields to present their ideas to a broader audience. Our first workshop “Ravens and Rivers: Debating the Rights of Animals and Nature” brought together animal rights and rights of nature experts, with the second workshop “Rabbits and Robots: Debating the Rights of Animals and Artificial Intelligences” building bridges with scholars in the emerging field of robot and AI rights.

## **Essay competition**

The Cambridge Centre for Animal Rights Law organises an annual essay competition in the field of animal rights law. The aim of this competition is to encourage students to explore the fascinating questions that animals rights raise, and to discuss these questions in an original piece of writing that may inspire them to engage further with the topic in the future. The first competition was held in 2021.

## **What activities, research and events we hope to fund**

Because of the funding provided, we have been able to offer the breadth of activities we intend for the Centre, so the next steps—and the need for further funding—are in greater depth.

To do that we need to support more academic research, by establishing paid positions for scholars in the Centre, and providing funding for researchers from other universities.

# The Team



DIRECTOR  
**Dr Sean Butler**

Dr Sean Butler has been a Fellow of St Edmund's College, Cambridge since 2002; previously he worked at Shell and Nokia.

He studied Law at Oxford (St Edmund Hall) and the London School of Economics, as well as Genetics at Cambridge (CPGS) before taking his PhD in social science at Imperial College, London.

He specialises in intellectual property strategy in life sciences, and technology-based start-ups. He is also CEO of Cambridge Agritech, a syndicate of investors in agritech startups. He is Director of Studies in Law at St Edmund's, and teaches Roman Law and Animal Rights Law.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**Dr Raffael Fasel**

Dr Raffael N Fasel is a Fellow in Law at the London School of Economics Law Department. He completed his award-winning PhD in Law on the theory of human and animal rights at the University of Cambridge (Sidney Sussex College), with stints as a visiting researcher at Harvard Law School and the University of Oxford.

He obtained an LLM from Yale Law School on a Fulbright scholarship, an MA in Philosophy from University College London, and holds a Bachelor of Law and a Master of Law degree from the University of Fribourg.

In 2018, Raffael was appointed Associate Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics. He currently teaches Animal Rights Law, Public Law, Jurisprudence, and Introduction to the Legal System in Cambridge and London.



How to *get* **involved.**



**It is fitting  
to reflect on  
what was  
achieved.**

GET INVOLVED

## **Taking part**

### **A reason to rally**

In 1822 Martin's Act was passed in the UK: one of the first laws in the world to prohibit cruelty to animals. It led to anti-cruelty laws and pro-welfare laws all around the world. As the 200th anniversary of that law approaches, it is fitting to reflect on what it achieved.

The bicentennial provides an opportunity to imagine what the future will look like, and what it would mean to honour or even surpass the spirit of the Act in the decades to come.

To promote  
intellectual  
exchange.

GET INVOLVED

## Taking part

### Committed, open and free

As an educational centre, we are committed to research, to teaching, and to promoting intellectual exchange. As a matter of policy everything we offer is free of charge, so that anyone may attend. We are increasingly recording our lectures and talks so they are accessible to people who cannot attend our events in person. You are very welcome to join any of our lectures, talks, seminars, and conferences.

We are always happy to have volunteers offer their skills to us. In the past, volunteers have helped us organise events, carry out small research tasks, and have put together a guide for our Cambridge visitors.

And of course we are happy to receive donations.

GET INVOLVED

## Taking part

### Options for donation

We want to strengthen and expand the work of the Centre. We plan to raise £100,000 in 2021-22 and are actively seeking donors.

If you wish to become a donor, or are interested in donating but have questions or concerns, please contact Sean Butler.

We are a UK-registered charity (Charity Number 1190232) and can receive donations tax-free. UK taxpayers can boost their donation by 25% through Gift Aid.

# Becoming a donor.

# Get in touch.

GET INVOLVED

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**Thank you.**  
**AnimalRightsLaw.org**